

Members

Rep. Charlie Brown, Chairperson
Rep. Linda Lawson
Rep. Dan Stevenson
Rep. Ralph Ayres
Rep. Daniel Dumezich
Rep. Dean Mock
Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Joseph Zakas
Sen. Ron Alting
Sen. Rose Antich
Sen. William Alexa
Sen. Earline Rogers
William Pemberton



NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMISSION

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Commission
James Sperlik, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

Authority: P.L. 149-1999

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 29, 2001
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Library Conference Center, Indiana
University Northwest, 3400
Broadway
Meeting City: Gary, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Charlie Brown, Chairperson; Rep. Linda Lawson; Rep. Dan Stevenson; Rep. Dean Mock; Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Joseph Zakas; Sen. Earline Rogers, Mayor Duane Dedelow.

Members Absent: Rep. Ralph Ayres; Rep. Daniel Dumezich; Sen. Ron Alting; Sen. Rose Antich; Sen. William Alexa; William Pemberton.

Representative Brown, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. The members of the Commission and Legislative Services staff introduced themselves, and each mentioned the district of representation. Chairperson Brown stated the topics assigned to the Commission this year by the Legislative Council, which are:

1. Study the revenues and expenditures of the Indiana toll road, planned

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

improvements to the toll road, toll road operations, and the feasibility of renewing efforts to enhance the toll road through public improvements and highway improvements in the counties through which the toll road passes.

2. Evaluate air transportation issues and identify all possible funding sources available to the Gary/Chicago airport.

Chairperson Brown mentioned that Representative Ayres is interested in a discussion concerning State Road 49. Chairperson Brown stated his desire, if funds permit, to have five meetings of the Commission this fall.

The topic of discussion at the meeting was that of the Gary/Chicago airport. The speakers were:

1. The Honorable Scott King, Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana

Mayor King told the Commission that the location of Gary, Indiana, adjacent to Chicago and to Lake Michigan is an advantage and offers several modes of transportation that can be used by business in this area. Issues related to the Gary/Chicago airport are related to very aggressive proposed expansion efforts across the state line. Mayor King mentioned the "phase 2 master plan" to be discussed more in depth by Mr. Karas; the master plan requires a substantial investment in infrastructure. In order to fund the master plan, if the state were to furnish approximately \$2.3 million dollars towards the expansion, Gary would provide matching funds, and then this amount would provide leverage for 90% funding from the federal government. Plans for this expansion would provide for essential and immediate needs. (A copy of that breakdown is provided as Exhibit A.)

Mayor King stated that the airport has not enjoyed a positive reaction with respect to toll road funding, and it has had disagreements with the Department of Natural Resources and Indiana Department of Environmental Management over land allocation. He suggested that the Commission interact with Illinois legislators interested in the issue of airport expansion. He furnished the Committee with Blueprint for Action, from the Illinois House Aviation Committee (a copy of the report is provided as Exhibit B.) Mayor King urged the Commission to consider the regionalization of the airport. In response to a question from Senator Rogers, Mayor King stated that Lake County has no money available to provide funding for the airport, although most communities have passed resolutions of support. Mayor King has a meeting set in September with the new Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation. Representative Stevenson stated that there still is concern in his district that earlier expansion plans were not always presented in an up-front manner. Discussion ensued concerning scheduling at the airport; currently, the only national carrier is Pan Am and it flies to non-hub airports.

2. The Honorable Duane Dedelow, Mayor, City of Hammond, Indiana

Mayor Dedelow expressed his and his city's support for the Gary airport. He is in favor of regionalization of the airport if representatives of other communities could be added to the board. He believes that light rail and the West Lake corridor issues must be addressed along with airport issues for the economic stability of the region for years to come.

3. Dr. William Staehle, President, Gary/Chicago Airport Board of Authority

Dr. Staehle explained the statutory authority for the Gary/Chicago airport and the establishment of the Chicago/Gary regional authority through a compact. The airport is served by Pan Am since the airline's rebirth, and another start-up airline may use the

airport. There now is a Boeing presence at the airport, along with overnight cargo usage and corporate jets. If the state could assist in the matching funds needed for the master plan, it would be greatly appreciated. In answer to a question from Representative Stevenson, Mr. Staehle stated that the majority of flyers come from northwest Indiana; Illinois residents view the state line as a wall. Gary public transit does come to the airport. Representative Brown asked both about wetlands and superfund issues at the airport; Mr. Staehle said that those both had been accounted for in the master plan.

4. Paul Karas, Administrator, Gary/Chicago Airport

Mr. Karas stated that the issue of the third airport in the Chicago area has become a political one. A report in 1991 regarding the airport contained some inaccuracies, and those still are perpetuated today. This new master plan is different than the earlier one; it proposes to add 1,000 acres over twenty years, and plans no expansion outside of Gary. A few homes may need to be soundproofed for a flyover area, and a few may need to be removed for a new South Shore station. In year 2000 money the proposed costs are \$390 million for year one, \$495 million in year two, and \$675 million in year three. The capital ongoing budget seeks \$2.3 million dollars in matching funds. Senator Landske asked if any other locales have a regional airport authority; it appears that there are none in the state. Senator Rogers asked if there are studies as to the economic benefit to the state if the expansion occurred; the Northwest Indiana Forum may be beginning this study. Mr. Karas thinks that the Gary site is best for the third airport as the infrastructure is already there, in contrast to the proposed Peotone, Illinois site.

5. Robert Hauer, STAND

Mr. Hauer is a consultant to eastern Will County, Illinois residents opposed to the Peotone airport. The Peotone proposal would make that new airport 2 1/2 times larger than O'Hare airport. He believes that there should be a bi-state transportation study commission to investigate the issue of airport facilities to the south and east of Chicago. In response to a question from Senator Landske, Mr. Heuer also considers high speed rail to be important to citizens of the area.

6. Other Speakers

Other speakers recognized by Chairperson Brown were Francisco Rosado Jr., Assistant Director of East Chicago Public Transportation, Councilman Alex Cherry Jr., of the Gary Common Council, and Kathy Noland, of the Indiana Department of Transportation.

CONCLUSION

Chairperson Brown requested additional topics of study from the Commission, and suggested the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's long range plans as one. He added that Representative Ayres was interested in discussing State Road 49 as it runs through his district. Representative Stevenson was interested in the Regional Transportation Authority in Lake County; Senator Landske, high speed rail; and Mayor Dedelow, the West Lake corridor.

The next meeting will be September 13, 2001 at 1 p.m., with the locale to be announced later. A further meeting on the charge given to the Committee concerning the Gary/Chicago airport will be later in September, with the location to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 p.m.